



Court Appointed Special Advocate Newsletter

A CHILD'S VOICE IN COURT

Superior Court of Arizona | Maricopa County Juvenile Division
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TIPS FOR FINDING THE BEST SUMMER CAMP

By Laura Devany

It's that time again. Kids will soon be out of school and looking for something to do. Just because they're in foster care doesn't mean they can't do what other kids do in the summer -- go to camp. Camp is a place where children can grow individually and socially as they embark on adventures that will transform everyday summer life into a special, stimulating world they will never forget. The right camp may be just what your CASA child needs. Talk to the CPS case manager about the idea and choose the camp carefully, there are some specific things to consider.

Camp Directors and Operators are the professionals who guide, support, entertain and educate children while at camp, so it's important to ask them several important questions in order to make the best choice.

Camp philosophy relates to the camp's purpose and how it impacts camp life, for example, is there a competitive or non-competitive emphasis? The Camp Director's experience is important, too. The American Camping Association's minimum standards for Camp Directors require a bachelor's degree, a minimum 16 weeks of camp administrative experience, and the completion of an in-service training within the past three years.

Ask about the staff. Accredited overnight camps require a ratio of counselors to campers as follows: one counselor for every six campers for ages 7 and 8; one counselor for every eight campers for ages 9-14; one counselor for every ten campers for ages 15-17. (Day camp ratios are 1:8 for 6-8; 1:10 for 9-14; 1:12 for 15-17.) Find out how old the counselors are and what experience they have with various age groups. The American Camping Association recommends at least 80% of the counselors and program staff should be 18 or older and

at least 20% of the administrative and program staff possess a bachelor's degree.

Ask for references. It could be helpful to talk to parents who have children attending the camp or talk to your friends about camps they've had experience with. Inquire about rules and discipline as well. Be sure you are comfortable and that you discuss any special needs with the director. Everything from facilities and medical staff to special foods and medications should be reviewed to your satisfaction. This includes visitation and clear direction on who the child can communicate with.

The following is a list of camps in the area that may be a good match for your CASA kids. Most offer sliding fee scales or financial aid. The Royal Family Kids Camp is part of a national program specifically for abused and neglected children. The number for the national headquarters is 949-548-6828.

DAY CAMPS

Royal Family Kids Camp, Scottsdale.....602-948-7810
Royal Family Kids Camp, Phoenix.....602-863-0945
Arizona Sports Ranch, Phoenix.....602-569-1457
Camp Intervention, Phoenix.....800-968-4332

OVERNIGHT CAMPS

Camp Wamatochick, Prescott.....602-954-7544
Shadow Rim Ranch, Payson.....602-253-6359
Sky-Y Camp, Prescott.....602-254-1571

Visit the following websites for more information:
www.razkids.com, www.kidscamps.com,
www.family.com Always contact the CPS case manager about the appropriateness of camp and the arrangement of payment. Most dependent children have up to \$350/year that can be used for day camps and up to \$550/year for overnight camps. Children in group or residential placements are NOT eligible for CPS funds for camp because they require a therapeutic and restricted environment (for which CPS pays). With CPS approval, some of these children can go to camp with other funds, like through AZ Friends of Foster Children (602-252-9445). If camp seems like a good idea for your CASA child, talk to CPS soon to get a head start on this summer.



VOLUNTEER PROFILE

Melanie Turrell

Melanie Turrell has been a CASA since 1997 and whether she intended to or not, she has become a bit of an expert on teenage mothers. Melanie has had two cases with teen mothers, one 14, the other 16. After one didn't take advantage of services offered to her and lost her child to adoption, Melanie signed on to work with another teen mother in hopes of a better ending. This 14-year-old had been in the system herself since she was two years old. What a challenge!

Melanie routinely visits her CASA child once a week and transports her to counseling appointments. This is quality time, Melanie said. "It's the best time to get information from your CASA child," she added. So instead of listening to the radio, they talk for the length of the drive to their destination and usually there's quite a bit of opening up.

Melanie feels teenagers don't connect to a lot of people and she was hoping to be a stable person in these two particular teenager's lives. She said that teenagers have usually built up a defense mechanism due to their issues and aren't usually receptive to letting others into their lives. Melanie knows that even though the CASA teen doesn't seem to appreciate and acknowledge her efforts, she knows that in her heart, what she is doing is helping in some way. Though she doesn't see instant changes, she hopes her CASA child will make better choices because of the influence she has had on her life.

This isn't Melanie's first venture in the field. She used to work in group homes in San Diego and in Wisconsin. She worked with boys and girls aged 6-17 and got a little burned out after a while. She moved into the secretarial field and eventually into the paralegal field where she now works. She missed working with children and was able to get back into it as a CASA.

Melanie is expecting her first child in July and she plans to stay on as a CASA. She said there would be something missing in her life if she didn't advocate as a CASA. Despite the frustrations of her cases, working full time, and being pregnant, Melanie continues to make weekly contact with her CASA child and attends all the required hearings and staffings. Her contact logs and reports are concise and thorough and she has been a joy to work with and have as a volunteer.

Commendations

The FCRB commended **Nicole Ekberg** for her thorough reports. Keep up the good work Nicole!

Kudos to our own **Laura Devany** from the staff and from the volunteers who have called to let us know how much they enjoy the newsletter. Laura began writing feature articles last October and has done a great job communicating important information to the volunteers. Laura is a second year graduate student in the Master of Mass Communication program at the Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Telecommunication at ASU. We appreciate Laura's talent and skill!

The case manager commended **Margaret Diaz** for doing a very good job at the FCRB. Way to go Margaret!

The FCRB and GAL commended **Beverly Burch** for her intervention on behalf of her CASA child who continues to improve his behavior. They say he couldn't have done it without you and your support!

The FCRB commended **Judy Chervenak** for her participation and thorough documentation in the case. Good going Judy!

The FCRB commended **Jennifer Fail** for her willingness to drive 500 miles to allow the children more time together. Thanks Jennifer, for going that extra mile, literally!

Thanks to **Mikayla Bailey-Null and Patricia Cohen** for submitting such detailed and easy to read logs on time. Your hard work and dedication to your cases is obvious!

The FCRB commended **Pat Willis** for her efforts to actively advocate for the children's best interest. Great job Pat!

The FCRB commended **Laura Lobraico** for her dedication to her case. Keep it up Laura!

The FCRB commended **Richard Brandes** for his tremendous dedication to his two CASA kids. Thanks for your hard work Richard!

Thank you **Dan Molinski** for helping La Donna recruit CASAs at Bank One Ballpark. We appreciate you pitching in!

CASA Sponsored Training

May 9, 7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m., East Valley Peer Group Meeting- Mentor Karen Tyrrell encourages all CASAs to attend. Peer groups allow CASAs the opportunity to share experiences and resources with other CASAs. All information is confidential. Location: 2051 E. Duke Dr., Tempe. Call Karen at 480-839-4039 to RSVP.

May 12-13, 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m., New Volunteer Orientation Training- CASA training will be held at the Administrative Office of the Courts, 1501 W. Washington, Room 119. If you know someone who would like to be a volunteer, please ask them to call the CASA office at 602-506-4083 to begin the screening process.

May 18, 6:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m., First Case Selection Meeting- New volunteers should attend this meeting to review and hopefully accept your first case. Please come with your feedback from Orientation Training. Dinner will be provided. Location: Juvenile Court Durango Facility, 3125 W. Durango Street, Room 223, Phoenix. RSVP to the CASA office at 602-506-4083.

May 31, 1:00 p.m.- Scottsdale Peer Group Meeting- Join mentor Angela Ashley, meet CASAs, and learn from their experiences. Peer groups are open to everyone. All information is confidential. Location: 7711 Charter Oak

Community Sponsored Training

Rd., Scottsdale. Call Angela at 480-922-5760 to RSVP.
May 24 or June 19, 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m., Conflict Management Skills for Women- If you ever back down on an important issue instead of sticking to your guns or you overreact and make a difficult situation even worse, come to this seminar and learn how to keep your cool, stand your ground and positively resolve conflict. Location: May 24th at the Quality Hotel & Resort in Phoenix; June 19th at the Twin Palms Hotel in Tempe. Cost is \$99 (tax deductible). Call 1-800-873-7545 or e-mail: enroll@skillpath.net for more information.

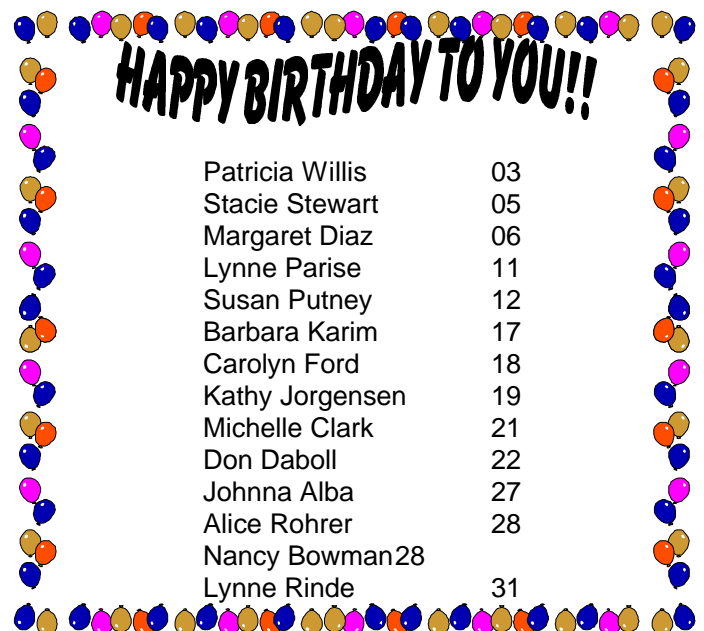
June 7-9, Family Centered Practice Conference 2000-Building Bridges with Arizona Families- An intensive, statewide training and networking opportunity featuring nationally recognized experts in the field of family centered practice. Location: YWCA Leadership Conference Center, 9440 N. 25th Ave., Phoenix. Call 480-759-9592 for more information.

June 9-10, 7:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m., The Colors of Grief- A multidisciplinary conference uniting professionals and families on the clinical and psychosocial aspects of death,

crisis and bereavement. Location: Wyndham Metrocenter, 10220 N. Metro Parkway East, Phoenix. Call the Arizona SIDS Alliance at 1-800-597-7437 for more information.

June 22-23, 8:00 a.m. - 4:45 p.m., 2000 Victim Services Annual Conference- This conference will provide professional training that will both inform and motivate individuals working in the victim services field. It covers services and issues relating to crime victims. Location: Sedona. Call 1-877-273-3762 for more information.

July 13, 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m., Parc Place Conference in the Pines- Professionals can gain in-depth knowledge of the role medications play in adolescent treatment, learn current best practices in adolescent residential treatment, and hear first hand personal perspectives on change and recovery. Location: Flagstaff. Cost: \$20. Call 602-840-4774 for more information.



WELCOME - ALICE ROHRER!

Alice is a new volunteer we accidentally missed last month. Sorry!

HELP WANTED:

Mentors are needed to provide support and guidance to new volunteers. One year CASA experience is required. For more information contact Nancy Molever at 602-506-5521.

THANK YOU to all the volunteers who attended the recognition luncheon on April 27th.

ANNOUNCEMENTS



Mark your calendars for **Saturday, June 3** from **11:30 - 1:30 p.m.** for **Arts Day for CASA Kids**. Free Arts AZ is hosting the activity at Made of Clay at 7119 E. 6th Ave. in Scottsdale. Kids are free and can take home their own hand painted pottery. CASAs get 25% off. RSVP to the CASA office at 602-506-4083 by 5-26-00. Limit of 15 kids.

Snap a picture of your CASA child and attach it to your court report. The Bench wants to see who these kids are. Remember to keep them confidential.

Welcome Dylania Deans! Dylania comes to CASA for an internship from the Family Advocacy Center where she served half of her term as an Americorps intern. Dylania interned in Washington, D.C. with the Coalition to End Grand Jury Abuse where she worked with U.S. Supreme Court Powell and the Bakke Affirmative Action case. Dylania attended the Universite d'Haute Bretagne in France and Faculte de Sciences Juridiques. C'est magnifique!

Thanks to **Dolores Segovia** for speaking to the Hispanic Pastoral Council on April 5th and for coming up with the idea of gathering Hispanic and minority CASAs to brainstorm ways to recruit more minorities. Call LaDonna Moss, CASA Recruiter, at 602-506-3930 if you are an Hispanic volunteer interested in getting together with other Hispanic CASAs.

If we don't already have your **e-mail address** or **fax number**, please send a message with your address to: Ldevany@superiorcourt.maricopa.gov so we can update our database. Remember you can communicate with mentors and coordinators by e-mail or fax; just don't use case identifying information over the Internet.

WEST SIDE PEER GROUP WANTED-- If you live on the West side and are willing to host a peer group meeting (with a mentor facilitating), please call the CASA office at 602-506-4083.

If you care about **children and their families**, you may be interested in a subscription to "**Children's Voice**," a new publication published six times a year with the latest information on research and data that you can use now. Regular features include articles on issues affecting children and families, opinions and commentary from leaders in the field, national news bites, child and family news at the state level, and interviews with child advocates and policy makers. \$25 for a one year subscription. Call 1-800-407-6273 for more information.

The **Resource Library** from the State Office is not yet available on the web due to technical difficulties. We'll keep you posted.

Books In Review

The Heart Knows Something Different...

Teenage Voices From the Foster Care System

230 pgs., by youth Communication, edited by Al Desetta, Persea Books, N.Y. 1996 (Available in the Durango CASA library)

This book is a collection of over three dozen short essays. Under the four chapters, "Family", "Living in the System", "Who Am I?", and "Looking to the Future", these gifted young authors testify to the best and the worst served up as daily fare by the foster care system in the United States.

The raw emotions in many of these stories brought me to tears but their open honesty and courage made me want to cheer because I knew they had what it takes to survive. Revealing a world that is startlingly brutal but also sometimes extraordinarily generous, they remind us what we already know — that the majority of Americans don't have a clue about the plight of these kids — nor do they want one.

However, as a CASA (part of the minority that care deeply), this is mandatory reading to understand and gain insight into the loss, grief and triumph of those living for weeks, months and many years "in the system".

...by Marilyn Priebe

Farewell

Good-bye to the following people who have left the program. Thank you for your time and commitment.

David Botsko
Jill Brindley
Erik Gessel
Rodney Martin
Robert Rodriguez
Mary Schmidt
Jacqueline Sullivan-Keiley
Maria Sutton

UNDERSTANDING THE INDIAN CHILD WELFARE ACT

The following article includes excerpts from Judge Maurice Portley's article printed in "Arizona Attorney" in February 2000 and Information from Judge Katharine English's April 13th satellite broadcast.

There are four times as many Indian children in adoptive homes in Arizona as there are non-Indian children. One out of every 98 Indian children are in foster care. This is, by proportion, three times as many Indian children in foster care as there are non Indian children.

The Indian Child Welfare Act was enacted in 1978 to protect the best interests of Indian children and to promote the stability and security of Indian tribes and families. It was congressional acknowledgement that an alarmingly high percentage of Indian families are broken up by the removal of their children and placed in non-Indian homes without considering the child's unique role as part of the social and cultural fabric of an Indian family and community. Congress also wanted to ensure that Indian children who were removed from their families could be returned to their tribes and extended families despite the belief that it would cause evil to remove a partly Indian child raised as an Anglo from an Anglo home and place her in an Indian foster home. The Act provides minimum federal standards for the removal of Indian children from their families and the placement of such children in foster or adoptive homes which will reflect the unique values of Indian culture.

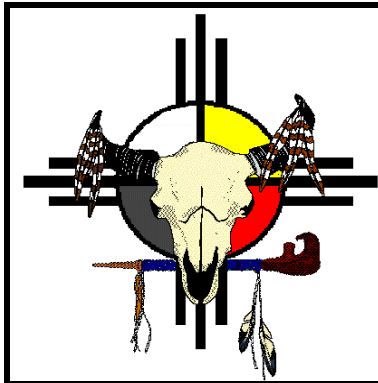
The Child Welfare Act applies only to a child custody proceeding regarding an Indian child. The Act defines an Indian child as any unmarried person who is under age 18 and is either a member of an Indian tribe or is eligible for membership in an Indian tribe and is the biological child of a member of a federally recognized Indian tribe. There are 22 registered tribes in Arizona. The local Bureau of Indian Affairs has information about specific tribes.

Just as CPS is required to make reasonable efforts with non-Indian families, they are required to make **active efforts** with Indian families to prevent the break up of an Indian family. This is reasonable efforts plus notification to the tribe. CPS must explore all possible resources starting with the tribal social service department and including extended family members and friends, local Indian programs, and individual Indian care givers.

Once notified of the removal of an Indian child, the tribe can assert its exclusive jurisdiction and have the child custody proceeding transferred to tribal court. Alternatively, it may allow the state court to maintain jurisdiction. It can, however, intervene and fully participate in the state proceedings or challenge a completed proceeding. When foster care is required, preference should be given in the following order to members of the Indian child's extended family, a tribally approved and licensed foster home, a state licensed Indian foster home, or any tribally approved placement. If a child is already in a non-Indian home when the tribal identity is confirmed, the tribe can be asked to certify or approve the home, usually with conditions of emphasis on ethnicity. The tribe has the right to change placements and preferences at any time.

So how does the adoption and Safe Families Act, which changes the focus from reunification to health and safety of children, interact with the Indian Child Welfare Act? ASFA does NOT modify ICWA, ICWA prevails in a conflict to provide the highest level of protection to Indian families.

The standard burden in dependency and termination actions increases for Indian children. In dependency proceedings, instead of a preponderance of the evidence standard, the Court must find that the children are dependent by the clear and convincing evidence standard, using expert evidence, and that the continued custody of the child by the parent or Indian custodian is likely to result in serious emotional or physical damage to the child. Similarly, the burden of proof for termination action rises from the clear and convincing standard to beyond a reasonable doubt.



CASAs can be more effective on ICWA cases by becoming familiar with the child's tribe. They can do this by calling the Bureau of Indian Affairs at 602-379-6600 or visiting the local website at www.phxao.az.bia.gov/Home.html. (There are many websites on specific tribes to include their history, culture, and government.) They should make the Tribal Social Services Department the first point of contact. The assigned tribal social worker plays the same vital role as the CPS case manager. The tribe's level of involvement varies from case to case and as previously mentioned, in some cases, tribes don't transfer jurisdiction but monitor the proceedings. Most importantly, CASAs must keep in mind that tribes are sovereign nations with their own histories, motivations, concerns, procedures, and laws. The Indian child is part of a larger community, and in order for the community to exist, it needs its children.

Legislative Update

The following is a partial list of bills that have been passed:

SB1071-Housing Assistance-Allows DES to provide housing assistance to families who are involved in open child protective services cases.

SB1134-Central Registry-Retains the CPS Central Registry, which contains all substantiated and unsubstantiated reports of child abuse, that was inadvertently set for repeal on June 30, 2000.

SB1136-CPS; Family Builders-Makes permanent the Family Builders Program within DES. Family Builders are community-based collaboratives, under contract with DES, that serve to assess and offer services on a voluntary basis to families reported to CPS with low risk, but a potential for abuse and neglect.

SB1183-DHS; Child Care- Makes changes to the licensure and certification requirements regarding child care facilities and child care group homes.

SB1280-Dependency; Employment; Substance Abuse Treatment-Allocates \$10 million per year for three years from the Federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families block grant, to be jointly administered by DES and DHS, for substance abuse services to families involved with CPS and to TANF recipients.

SB1290-Kinship Foster Care-Establishes kinship foster care.

SB2092-Kinship Foster Care-Establishes a kinship foster care services program within DES. Expedites the placement process for relative placements. Establishes minimum guidelines to assure child safety, and outline payment rates.

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